United Nations A/ES-10/754–S/2017/447

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
25 May 2017

Original: English

General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Identical letters dated 24 May 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Today regrettably marks the thirty-eighth day of the Palestinian prisoners' hunger strike in peaceful, non-violent and collective protest of their inhumane treatment in Israeli captivity. This hunger strike was undertaken by more than 1,500 prisoners to also draw urgent attention to the critical plight of the over 6,500 Palestinian prisoners and detainees being held by Israel, the occupying Power, and to appeal for respect of their fundamental human rights.

Unfortunately, this appeal has been met with further punitive measures by Israel, the occupying Power, against the prisoners, who are enduring harsh conditions and declining health. This has included solitary confinement, threats of force-feeding and relentless incitement against prisoners and their families, dismissing their legitimate grievances and rights. Moreover, despite the deteriorating health of many of the prisoners, the occupying Power continues its intransigent refusal to address their minimal calls for respect of basic rights and for more humane treatment, provoking greater tensions and worries among the prisoners' families and the Palestinian people as a whole. At the same time, the occupying Power has not relented in its arrest campaign, persisting with its daily raids and arrest of Palestinian civilians throughout Occupied Palestine.

In this regard, we draw your urgent attention to the fact that more than 60 of the hunger strikers have been moved by the occupation authorities to hospitals as a result of their deteriorating medical condition, while 592 other hunger strikers have been moved for observation to infirmaries set up in the prisons. Among the dangerous consequences they are suffering are repeated loss of consciousness, nausea, vomiting, severe head and limb pains, low blood pressure, low heart rates and weight loss of at least 15 kg. In addition to this, the occupying Power is cruelly withholding information regarding the health of prisoners on hunger strike from their families, legal representatives and relevant human rights organizations.

17-08491 (E) 010617

Please recycle

The deteriorating situation of Palestinian prisoners and detainees and Israel's negative reaction to their basic demands has heightened the solidarity of the entire Palestinian population in support of the prisoners. Across Occupied Palestine, including East Jerusalem, countless peaceful protests and demonstrations have taken place. Unfortunately, as is the usual practice, Israeli occupying forces have responded with brute force and excessive violence against the civilian protesters. This week, occupying soldiers shot and injured at least 11 other Palestinians taking part in protests in support of the hunger-striking prisoners as part of a general strike undertaken across Occupied Palestine.

At the same time, Israeli settlers, illegally transferred to our land, have exploited the rising tensions and instability and intensified their violent actions against the Palestinian civilian population. On 18 May 2017, during a demonstration in a village near Nablus in the occupied West Bank, a terrorist settler, who was driving on a road where demonstrations were taking place, got out of his car and shot at Palestinian protestors. He shot a Palestinian, Muataz Hussein Hilal Bani Shamsa (age 23), in the head, killing him and injuring an Associated Press photographer who was also in the area. Following the killing of this young Palestinian man, another Israeli settler distributed candy to passing Israeli vehicles in provocative and cruel celebration of this terrorist crime. On that same day, in Ramallah, where protests were also being held, Israeli occupying forces fired on civilian demonstrators, wounding one Palestinian. This was preceded a day earlier by an Israeli settler firing his gun at protesters near Ramallah, injuring a 19-year-old Palestinian.

As the situation continues to deteriorate and destabilize, we call once again for attention to this crisis and for international intervention to demand and compel Israel's respect of its obligations as an occupying Power under international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including as regards the Palestinian prisoners and detainees in its captivity, including those on hunger strike. We underscore in specific Israel's obligations in this regard under article 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. We thus call once more for an end to the abuse of Palestinian prisoners and for their humane treatment in captivity, in conformity with international law, while reiterating our calls for their release.

The international community cannot wait any longer to take action in order to avert the further decline of the situation, including to avert the loss of life of any of the hunger-striking prisoners, as well as to stem the rising tensions and anger of the Palestinian street. This requires a humane response to the prisoners' pleas and plight and serious efforts to de-escalate tensions. Failure to do so will further exacerbate the situation on the ground, with negative implications for the prospects for peace and potentially far-reaching consequences.

Before concluding, we wish to bring to your attention the situation in the Gaza Strip, where the entire population remains under Israel's inhumane and illegal blockade and upon which the occupying Power continues to commit aggressions and brutality. In separate incidents, on 22 May, Israeli occupying forces opened fire on Palestinian farmers and fishermen. Reports indicated that occupying forces stationed at a military post northeast of Khan Younis in southern Gaza opened fire on Palestinian farmers tending to their land near the Israeli-imposed border fence and that occupying forces opened fire on Palestinian farmland east of Al-Maghazi refugee camp in central Gaza. These incidents come on the heels of the Israeli shooting and killing an unarmed, young Palestinian fisherman, Muhammad Majid Bakr (age 23), off the coast of Gaza at a distance of just 3 metres just last week. As reported by the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights: "None of the fishermen posed any threat to the live of Israeli soldiers. This also emphasizes continuation of

Israel's policy to target the fishermen and their safety and deny them from freely sailing and fishing within the allowed fishing area."

As tensions continue to rise across Occupied Palestine under this suffocating, illegal Israeli occupation, we again appeal for the international community's urgent attention and action in line with international law and the clear commitments and responsibilities in this regard. Demands must be made for Israel, the occupying Power, to respect its legal obligations and comply with the relevant United Nations resolutions. The occupying Power must not be appeased as it persists with its violations, obstruction of peace, and denial and obstruction of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination. Rather, it must be made to understand that one day it will be held accountable for all of its human rights violations against the Palestinian people and for its unlawful occupation and colonization of their land. It is high time to end the culture of impunity that has allowed Israel to commit such grave crimes against a defenceless, occupied people for far too long without consequence. As we rapidly approach the date of the fiftieth year of the Israeli occupation, this task has become more urgent than ever. We urge the international community, including the Security Council, to rise to its responsibilities.

This letter is in follow-up to our 612 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 12 May 2017 (A/ES-10/753-S/2017/423), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Feda **Abdelhady-Nasser**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

United Nations A/71/916–S/2017/448

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
30 May 2017

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Agenda item 32
Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Identical letters dated 23 May 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the signing of a so-called agreement between the Russian Federation and its occupation regime in Sokhumi on the creation of joint information-coordination centre, dated 18 May 2017 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex issued as an official document of the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 32, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kaha **Imnadze**
Permanent Representative

17-08720 (E) 020617

Please recycle

Annex to the identical letters dated 23 May 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the signing of a so-called agreement between the Russian Federation and its occupation regime in Sokhumi on the creation of joint information-coordination centre

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia condemns the signing of a so-called agreement between the Russian Federation and its occupation regime in Sokhumi on "the rules of establishment and functioning of the joint information-coordination centre of agencies for internal affairs" that took place on 18 May 2017.

Creation by the Russian Federation of a so-called joint group of armed forces in the Abkhazia region, now followed by the merger of law enforcement and investigative bodies, which were envisaged by the 2014 so-called treaty on alliance and strategic partnership, represent clear proof of a factual annexation process of the occupied region.

The so-called agreement totally disregards fundamental principles and norms of international law such as sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of internationally recognized borders. This is an intentional step taken by the Russian Federation to undermine the peace policy of the Georgian Government, supported by the international community. Such kind of actions contribute to destabilization of the situation in the region and harm the Geneva international discussions.

Ongoing illegal processes in the occupied territories of Georgia vividly demonstrate the need for firm and consolidated international efforts. We appeal to the international community to take effective measures aimed at de-occupation and prevention of the annexation of Georgia's occupied regions.

United Nations A/71/915–S/2017/449

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
25 May 2017

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Agenda items 17 and 61

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Macroeconomic policy questions

Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

Letter dated 24 May 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith the answers of the spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) given to the questions raised by the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on 23 May 2017 with regard to the DPRK's test-launch of the strategic ballistic missile Pukguksong-2 (see annex I), and the service of the Rajin-Vladivostok international tourist liner (see annex II).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 17 and 61, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **Ja** Song Nam
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

17-08492 (E) 010617

Please recycle

Annex I to the letter dated 24 May 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Answer of the spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the questions raised by KCNA on 23 May 2017 with regard to the test-launch of the strategic ballistic missile Pukguksong-2

The officials in the field of national defence science and technology and the workers in the munitions field of the DPRK successfully carried out the test-launch of ground-to-ground medium- to long-range strategic ballistic missile Pukguksong-2 amid continued measures for bolstering the nuclear force of the country.

As reported, the recent launch aimed to finally confirm the technical specifications of the overall weaponry system of the Pukguksong-2 series and fully examine their adaptability to various combat conditions before their deployment for action.

This is part of the normal process for bolstering the military capabilities for self-defence and a process that has to be gone through for deployment.

But the U.S. and its followers again published a Security Council press statement peppered with rhetoric such as "sanctions" and "denunciation".

We flatly reject the press statement taking advantage of the U.S. hostile policy toward the DPRK.

Nothing favourable can be expected from the U.S. and its followers obsessed by inveterate repugnancy and hostility towards the DPRK. But it is absolutely ridiculous to see them finding fault with the DPRK's every measure for self-defence.

The DPRK substantially displayed the capabilities for mounting a nuclear attack at Hawaii, housing the U.S. Pacific forces command and the Pacific operational theatre, including Alaska, and has built full capabilities for attacking the U.S. mainland, the stronghold of aggression.

The U.S. and its followers' despicable act of taking issue with the DPRK's measures for bolstering nuclear force will only result in increasing our hostility to them and furthering the efforts to diversify and modernize our own nuclear force.

Annex II to the letter dated 24 May 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Answer of the spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the questions raised by KCNA on 23 May 2017 with regard to the service of the Rajin-Vladivostok international tourist liner

The Rajin-Vladivostok international tourist liner "Mangyongbong" has recently begun its service.

Its regular operation under an agreement between the DPRK and Russia will be able to contribute to developing bilateral cooperation in such economic fields as sea transport and tourism.

This is normal bilateral cooperation work aimed at expanding the bilateral economic relations and deepening the friendship through humanitarian exchanges and visits.

However, the U.S., running amok to ratchet up sanctions against the DPRK, faulted even the service of the liner, a normal economic cooperation undertaking between the two sovereign States, with mobilization of its vassal forces, in a bid to prevent the DPRK-Russia economic cooperation and suffocate the DPRK through a tightened economic blockade.

Such action is arousing a strong backlash and rejection from Russia as it is an arbitrary practice, seriously encroaching on the legal interests of not only the DPRK, but also of Russia.

No matter what others may say, the DPRK-Russia economic cooperation, including the service of the liner, will steadily develop in keeping with the desire and common interests of the two peoples.

United Nations S/2017/450

Security Council

Distr.: General
25 May 2017

Original: English

Note verbale dated 24 May 2017 from the Permanent Mission of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

The Permanent Mission of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the United Nations in New York presents its compliments to the President of the Security Council and has the honour to attach herewith a copy of the speech made by the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, at the Arab Islamic American Summit in Riyadh on 21 May 2017 (see annex).

The Permanent Mission requests that the present note verbale and its annex be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

17-08483 (E) 300517 310517

Please recycle

Annex to the note verbale dated 24 May 2017 from the Permanent Mission of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: Arabic and English]

Speech by President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, at the Arab-Islamic-American Summit held in Riyadh on 21 May 2017

My brother, His Majesty King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia,

Your Excellency President Donald Trump, President of the United States of America,

Your Majesties, Highnesses, and Excellencies,

Allow me at the outset to convey to you the greetings of Egypt, with its Muslims and Copts, its civilization that stretches back thousands of years, its land that has been a crossroads of Islam, Christianity and Judaism, and its outstanding contributions to the history of humanity and science, all of which have made it a symbol of moderation and enlightenment.

Our meeting today, in addition to its political importance, has a symbolic significance that no one could miss. It reflects our firm resolve to renew the partnership between Arab Islamic countries and the United States of America, thereby dispelling the misguided illusions of the advocates of a clash of civilizations, who can only envision relations among peoples as a conflict in which one side aims to eliminate the other. Such people fail to recognize the true significance of civilizational and cultural diversity, which allows for the enrichment of life and human experience by elevating the values of cooperation, tolerance, acceptance of the other and respect for the right to differ.

You will agree that all of us have a clear interest in enshrining those human values. We also have a key role in countering the causes of divisions, conflicts and extremism, by which I mean specifically the danger of terrorism, which has become a formidable threat to the peoples of the entire world.

Countering the threat of terrorism and rooting it out require, in tandem with security and military measures, a holistic approach that encompasses political, ideological and development aspects. However, the real question that needs to be seriously and frankly addressed is that of how this holistic approach can be implemented on the ground and on what basis.

In that regard, allow me to put forward the following four important aspects:

First, we must talk about counter-terrorism in a comprehensive manner. That means confronting all terrorist organizations without discrimination. It is not possible to limit the confrontation to one or two organizations. Terrorist organizations operate in a cancerous network and are interconnected in most parts of the world by numerous bonds, including ideology, financing and military, security and intelligence coordination. Therefore, it is not feasible to confine the confrontation to one theatre of operations to the exclusion of others. Successfully eradicating the threat of terrorism requires confronting all terrorist organizations comprehensively and simultaneously on all fronts.

In that regard, you all know that Egypt is fighting a ferocious war against terrorist organizations in northern Sinai. We continue to score victories and make steady progress, and are committed to maintaining the pace and scope of those

efforts so as to root out terrorism with minimum losses while protecting civilian lives.

Our battle is part and parcel of the global war against terrorism. We are committed to defeating the terrorist organizations and extending our hand in assistance and partnership with all allies in the fight against those organizations everywhere.

Secondly, confronting terrorism comprehensively means addressing all its dimensions, including financing, weapons provision and political and ideological support. A terrorist is not only the one who bears arms, but also the one who provides training, financing, weapons and political and ideological cover.

Let me speak frankly and ask: Where are the safe havens that are offered for terrorist organizations to train their fighters, treat their wounded and replenish their equipment? Who buys the natural resources they control, such as oil? Who facilitates their trade in antiquities and narcotics? Where do they receive financial donations from? How do they manage to maintain a media presence through outlets that have been happy to become propaganda platforms for terrorist organizations?

Anyone who does any of those things is a key partner in terrorism. Unfortunately, there are States involved in supporting and funding terrorist organizations and in offering them safe havens. There are also States that refuse to share information and databases on foreign terrorist fighters, even with INTERPOL.

The third element of the Egyptian vision for confronting terrorism is putting an end to the terrorist organizations' ability to recruit new fighters, through a comprehensive approach at both the ideological and intellectual levels. The fight against terrorism is primarily an intellectual fight. Successfully confronting the terrorist organizations must include paralyzing their ability to recruit and attract sympathizers with deviant interpretations of religious teachings that that distort the tolerant essence of true religion for political purposes.

You probably all recall that two years ago I proposed an initiative to renew religious discourse with a view to a comprehensive cultural revolution that would highlight the essential tolerant nature of Islam, and confront attempts to hijack that religion and barricade it behind misinterpretations and pretexts that justify crimes that have no place in our religious teachings.

I am following up on implementation of this initiative with the established religious institutions in Egypt — above all Al-Azhar, which is the authority within moderate Islam — and in cooperation with leading intellectuals and scholars throughout the Arab and Islamic worlds. I am confident that this aspect is no less important than operations in the field to eradicating terrorist organizations.

Last but not least, we must admit that one of the essential conditions for an environment conducive to the growth of terrorist organizations is the disintegration and instability of national institutions in our Arab region.

It is no secret that over the past few years, we have seen heavily financed systematic attempts to undermine our States' institutions and plunge the region into a destructive vacuum. This has created perfect conditions for the emergence of terrorist organizations and the exhaustion of our peoples in sectarian and ethnic conflicts.

Filling the vacuum in which terrorism grows and proliferates requires exerting every effort to restore and reinforce the unity, independence and efficiency of national institutions in the Arab world. That includes meeting the aspirations of the peoples for the revival of the State by laying the foundations for political, economic and social reform, committing to standards of good governance, respecting human

rights, instilling concepts of the rule of law and citizenship, respecting women and empowering youth.

Over the past few years, Egypt has set a historic example by restoring its national institutions in a peaceful and civil manner by implementing the sweeping popular will that rejected all attempts to hijack the institutions of state and the national identity forged by Egypt over the course of its long history. After regaining their State, the Egyptian people have continued to build and enhance the capacity of their national institutions, achieving progress in political economic and social reforms day after day.

Egypt also fully supports all efforts to resolve the region's various crises so as to maintain the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of national States and to protect them from the forces of extremism and sectarian fragmentation. Egypt categorically rejects all attempts to intervene in the domestic affairs of Arab and Islamic countries or attempts to fuel sectarianism, which provides a fertile ground for the proliferation of terrorism and the collapse of the national State.

I also wish to make clear that eradicating terrorism will not have any tangible success unless the Palestinian issue is settled through a just, comprehensive and final resolution on the basis of a two-State solution and the relevant legitimate international terms of reference, which would provide a new reality for the region's peoples and would enable them to enjoy prosperity, peace and security. Such a settlement would also eliminate one of the pretexts that terrorists use to justify their horrendous crimes.

Your Majesties, Highnesses, and Excellencies,

I wanted to share with you these four aspects of Egypt's counter-terrorism vision out of our conviction that terrorism is the biggest threat that we all face. This comprehensive approach, based on the four aspects that I have mentioned, ought to lay the foundation for a new phase of cooperation among our countries and peoples.

I should also like to express my appreciation for the insightful vision of President Trump, who, since assuming office, has proposed a robust policy to address the challenges of terrorism, which he has reaffirmed before us here today. I have no doubt that the United States is capable of creating a much needed international momentum for the comprehensive strategy that I have outlined today. That would include formulating a clear action plan with a specified timeframe to eliminate funding and weapons for terrorist networks and deprive them of safe havens. It would also include actively confronting movements that conceal their true nature and market themselves as political entities, when in fact they cultivate terrorists and promote their infiltration into societies to exploit the opportunities to prey on the popular will to practice their extremist and exclusionary policies.

Egypt has always been a pioneer of peace and open to various peoples and cultures. The Egyptian people will always be the first to extend the hand of cooperation and communication with their friends and partners in the region and the entire world.

May God grant us success in doing right by our peoples.

May peace be upon you.

United Nations S/2017/451

Security Council

Distr.: General
26 May 2017
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 24 May 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, and further to our previous letters concerning the Jordanian regime's support for the armed terrorist groups that are active and have committed brutal terrorist acts in the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic, I should like to inform you that the Jordanian regime has facilitated the entry, through a number of border crossings, of trucks carrying weapons destined for armed terrorist groups.

At 0940 hours on 31 March 2017, armed terrorist groups brought a convoy of five trucks carrying arms and ammunition from Jordan into Syria via the Abu Sharshuh border crossing in the Suwayda' countryside.

At 2030 hours on 17 April 2017, armed terrorist groups brought a convoy of 16 four-wheel drive vehicles carrying arms and ammunition from Jordan into Syria via the Abu Sharshuh border. They headed towards the Rusay'i well in the Suwayda' desert.

The Jordanian authorities began preparations for building a military base at the former Syrian border guard battalion headquarters between the villages of Amman and Nada in south-east Dar'a governorate. They built a road from Mafraq airbase to the site, and began clearing space, excavating, installing emplacements, raising berms and bringing in pre-fabricated buildings. They also displaced residents from the two villages, closed off the region with checkpoints, and barred civilians from entering it.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reiterates that the conduct of the Jordanian regime and the direct support that it provides to terrorist groups in Syria are a blatant violation of the principles of international law, the provisions of the Charter and Security Council resolutions concerning counter-terrorism, including resolutions 1267 (1999), 1373 (2001), 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014), 2199 (2015) and 2253 (2015), which reaffirm that States Members of the United Nations must not provide any form of support to terrorist groups or the members thereof.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic once again calls on the Security Council to fulfil its responsibilities and compel the Jordanian regime to desist from its practices, which threaten security and stability in the region and throughout the world.

17-08535 (E) 310517 310517

Please recycle

I should be grateful if the present letter could be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mounzer **Mounzer**
Minister Plenipotentiary
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

United Nations S/2017/452

Security Council

Distr.: General
26 May 2017

Original: English

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: draft resolution

The Security Council,

Recalling all its previous resolutions and statements of its President concerning the situation in Somalia, in particular resolutions 2245 (2015) and 2297 (2016),

Noting that the joint assessment mission of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) requested in paragraph 24 of resolution 2297 (2016) to ensure that AMISOM is properly configured to support the next phase of state-building in Somalia, and requested to present options and recommendations to the Security Council, has been delayed,

Looking forward to the report of the joint assessment by 15 July 2017, *recognizing* the importance of adequate time to consider the recommendations of the report and in this regard, *also recognizing* the need for an extension to the authorization of AMISOM,

Determining that the situation in Somalia continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security in the region,

Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,

1. *Decides* to authorize the Member States of the African Union to maintain the deployment of AMISOM until 31 August 2017, in line with the Security Council's request to the African Union for a maximum level of 22,126 uniformed personnel, and *authorizes* AMISOM to take all necessary measures to carry out its mandate, as set out in paragraphs 4-7 of resolution 2297 (2016);

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide logistical support as set out in paragraph 2 of resolution 2245 (2015);

3. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.

17-08529 (E) 260517

Please recycle

United Nations S/2017/453

Security Council

Distr.: General
30 May 2017
English
Original: Russian

Letter dated 24 May 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith information bulletins from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence on observance of the ceasefire regime in the Syrian Arab Republic for the period 20-24 May 2017 (see annex).

I should be grateful if this letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) P. **Ilichev**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

17-08735 (E) 010617 010617

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 24 May 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence on observance of the ceasefire regime (20 May 2017)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The situation in the de-escalation areas has been assessed as stable.

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported 11 incidents of gunfire in the following governorates: five in Damascus, three in Hama and three in Ladhiqiyah.

The Turkish representative office has reported four violations in the following governorates: one in Damascus, one in Hama, one in Aleppo and one in Idlib.

Most of the incidents of small arms being fired indiscriminately have been reported in areas controlled by fighters of the terrorist groups Nusrah Front and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

The most egregious violations reported by the Russian Federation involved shelling in the north of Hama governorate in the area near Bayda. As a result of the clash, the fighters' emplacements were destroyed. There were no civilian casualties or Syrian military casualties.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

Over the past 24 hours, the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has not carried out any humanitarian operations.

In total, 1,235 humanitarian operations have been carried out.

The United Nations and partners are continuing to provide food, medical, psychological and legal assistance to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic. Work is also continuing to restore infrastructure and provide temporary housing to all those in need.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, no ceasefire agreements have been signed with populated areas.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process remains unchanged at 1,505.

Negotiations on joining the ceasefire regime have continued with armed opposition groups in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Homs and Qunaytirah governorates.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 219.

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence on observance of the ceasefire regime (21 May 2017)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The situation in the de-escalation areas has been assessed as stable.

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported 12 incidents of gunfire in the following governorates: two in Damascus, nine in Hama and one in Dar'a.

The Turkish representative office has reported six violations: five in Hama governorate and one in Aleppo governorate.

Most of the incidents of small arms being fired indiscriminately have been reported in areas controlled by fighters of the terrorist groups Nusrah Front and ISIL.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

Over the past 24 hours, the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has carried out eight humanitarian operations, including:

The delivery of 1.7 tons of food products to the local population in Aleppo governorate;

The delivery of 2 tons of food parcels and bedding to Ladhiqiyah governorate;

The delivery of 1.3 tons of food parcels to Qunaytirah governorate;

The total weight of humanitarian cargo was 5 tons;

Humanitarian aid was provided to 1,547 people;

In total, 1,243 humanitarian operations have been carried out.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, no ceasefire agreements have been signed with populated areas.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process remains unchanged at 1,505.

Negotiations on joining the ceasefire regime have continued with armed opposition groups in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Homs and Qunaytirah governorates.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 219.

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence on observance of the ceasefire regime (22 May 2017)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The situation in the de-escalation areas has been assessed as stable.

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported 10 incidents of gunfire in the following governorates: five in Damascus, one in Ladhiqiyah and four in Hama.

The Turkish representative office has reported three violations in the following governorates: one in Damascus and two in Dar'a.

Most of the incidents of small arms being fired indiscriminately have been reported in areas controlled by fighters of the terrorist groups Nusrah Front and ISIL.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

Over the past 24 hours, the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has carried out four humanitarian operations in Aleppo city, delivering 4.8 tons of drinking water to the local population.

Humanitarian aid was provided to 1,507 people.

In total, 1,247 humanitarian operations have been carried out.

One United Nations humanitarian operation was carried out: the Russian airline Abakan Air parachuted a total of 21 tons of humanitarian cargo (food products) near to the city of Dayr-al-Zawr.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, no ceasefire agreements have been signed with populated areas.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process remains unchanged at 1,505.

Negotiations on joining the ceasefire regime have continued with armed opposition groups in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Homs and Qunaytirah governorates.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 219.

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence on observance of the ceasefire regime (23 May 2017)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The situation in the de-escalation areas has been assessed as stable.

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported nine incidents of gunfire in the following governorates: one in Aleppo, one in Damascus, one in Dar'a, two in Ladhiqiyah, three in Hama and one in Qunaytirah.

The Turkish representative office has reported two violations in Dar'a governorate.

Most of the incidents of small arms being fired indiscriminately have been reported in areas controlled by fighters of the terrorist groups Nusrah Front and ISIL.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

Over the past 24 hours, the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has carried out four humanitarian operations in Aleppo city, delivering 4.8 tons of drinking water to the local population. The total weight was 4.8 tons.

Humanitarian aid was provided to 1,507 people. In total, 1,251 humanitarian operations have been carried out.

Three humanitarian convoys were dispatched through the United Nations: from Ramtha (Jordan) to Tall Shihab and Kahil in Dar'a governorate; and from Damascus city to Jairud in Damascus governorate.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, two ceasefire agreements have been signed with populated areas.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process has increased to 1,507.

Negotiations on joining the ceasefire regime have continued with armed opposition groups in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Homs and Qunaytirah governorates.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 219.

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence on observance of the ceasefire regime (24 May 2017)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The situation in the de-escalation areas has been assessed as stable.

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported 10 incidents of gunfire in the following governorates: four in Damascus, two in Dar'a, two in Ladhiqiyah and two in Hama.

The Turkish representative office has reported four violations in the following governorates: one in Damascus and three in Dar'a.

Most of the incidents of small arms being fired indiscriminately have been reported in areas controlled by fighters of the terrorist groups Nusrah Front and ISIL.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

Over the past 24 hours, the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has carried out six humanitarian operations, including:

Five in Aleppo governorate, delivering 1 ton of food products to the local population;

One in Suwayda' governorate, delivering 1 ton of food parcels;

The total weight of humanitarian cargo was 2 tons;

Humanitarian aid was provided to 730 people;

In total, 1,257 humanitarian operations have been carried out;

One United Nations humanitarian operation was carried out: the Russian airline Abakan Air parachuted a total of 21 tons of humanitarian cargo (food products) near to the city of Dayr-al-Zawr.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, no ceasefire agreements have been signed with populated areas.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process remains unchanged at 1,507.

Negotiations on joining the ceasefire regime have continued with armed opposition groups in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Homs and Qunaytirah governorates.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 219.

United Nations S/2017/454

Security Council

Distr.: General
26 May 2017

Original: English

Report of the Secretary-General on options for authorization and support for African Union peace support operations

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2320 (2016) of 18 November 2016 in which the Council, inter alia, requested me to continue working closely with the African Union to refine options for further cooperation on the relevant African Union proposals, including on financing, accountability, joint planning and the process for mandating African Union peace support operations, subject to authorization by the Security Council; and to provide the Security Council with a detailed report within six months. This report builds on the findings of the joint African Union-United Nations review of available mechanisms to finance and support African Union peace operations authorized by the Security Council (A/71/410-S/2016/809).

II. Context

2. The joint review noted that the African Union-United Nations partnership on peace operations has continued to evolve and innovate in the past 15 years, and has become essential to respond to common challenges posed by armed conflicts in Africa. Peace support operations are a key tool on which the international community increasingly relies to address challenges to peace and security in Africa, in large part because of the demonstrated ability and willingness of the African Union to deploy rapidly and its doctrinal flexibility, allowing it to deploy missions in particularly challenging environments with robust mandated tasks, including peace enforcement and counter-terrorism.

3. The joint review noted that the African Union's willingness to deploy and respond to challenging situations through the deployment of peace support operations has been undermined by a lack of capacity in key areas, particularly staffing, logistics and some key military capabilities. All African Union missions have relied to some extent on external partners for support. The joint review made clear that the African Union must continue to build its capacity to plan, finance, sustain and oversee its own missions so that it can implement its mandates, meet the expectations of its membership and partners, and enhance the partnership with the United Nations. Furthermore, the joint review recognized the need for African Union peace support operations to have predictable and sustainable financing and support.

17-07675 (E) 300517

Please recycle

4. Since the publication of the joint review, significant strides towards furthering the partnership have been made. At the African Union summit in January 2017, I committed to strengthening the partnership on political issues and peace operations, with stronger mutual support and continued technical assistance. On 19 April, the new Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, and I convened the first United Nations-African Union Annual Conference at United Nations Headquarters. The Conference, convened at the highest levels of the two secretariats, illustrated the new chapter of the strategic partnership between the two organizations. Further, the Conference confirmed our commitment to strengthen dialogue, enhance existing mechanisms for coordination and cooperation and continue to forge a common vision in line with our priorities. During the Conference, the Chairperson and I endorsed and co-signed the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security. It provides for a strategic approach between the two organizations to address challenges to peace and security across the full spectrum of the conflict cycle. At the technical level, joint work was undertaken over the past six months to explore different modalities for future support of the United Nations to African Union peace support operations pursuant to Security Council resolution 2320 (2016).

5. In the meantime, the United Nations peace and security architecture continues to evolve. It is increasingly clear that more must be done to prevent conflicts from spiralling out of control and that dialogue with regional and subregional partners is a key aspect of this agenda. It is also clear that United Nations peacekeeping operations are too often deployed in places where there is no peace to keep and where they are subject to hostility and lack of cooperation from host governments as well as terrorist threats. Partnership with regional and subregional organizations to determine the right and timely responses is imperative to ensuring our effectiveness, as is ensuring that our systems for the management and administration of our operations are fit for purpose.

III. Joint planning and mandating of African Union peace support operations authorized by the Security Council

6. Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations and its three Articles (52 to 54) define the primacy of the Security Council vis-à-vis regional and subregional organizations and the complementary and subsidiary nature of the latter. The Charter provides the Security Council with the oversight role of activities undertaken under regional arrangements or by regional agencies for the maintenance of international peace and security. Article 54 provides that regional organizations shall keep the Council fully informed of these activities.

7. The report of August 2016 of the High Representative for the African Union Peace Fund entitled "Securing Predictable and Sustainable Financing for Peace in Africa" proposed a process for authorizing African Union peace support operations by the Security Council for which support through assessed contributions was sought. The proposals of the High Representative for financial support by the United Nations, along with existing United Nations system-wide policy frameworks such as the United Nations integrated assessment and planning policy and internal United Nations guidelines of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support, particularly the peacekeeping planning policy, were used to develop a general framework for the joint planning, mandating and oversight of African Union peace support operations by the United Nations and the African Union. The resulting joint process outlined below is envisaged for, but not necessarily limited to, situations in which the African Union might seek financial

support from the United Nations for the deployment of an African Union peace support operation. Some underlying guiding principles are presented below to frame the presentation of the key phases and decision points related to a proposed generic planning, mandating and oversight process of such applicable African Union peace support operations.

Guiding principles for joint planning and mandating

8. A key consideration for a joint process is preserving the African Union's ability to respond rapidly and its doctrinal flexibility. This may require, in some cases, that technical aspects of the process are accelerated to the extent possible when compared to the typical time frames for the planning of new United Nations peacekeeping operations. The ultimate goal for the United Nations and the African Union should be to jointly identify and support the best approaches to resolve or respond to crises on the basis of a common assessment rather than replicating the existing processes for planning United Nations peacekeeping operations or African Union peace support operations.

9. While the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council should consult closely on peace and security challenges in Africa, it should be acknowledged that the two organizations have separate and distinct decision-making processes and governance structures, which should be respected. As the primary organ for maintaining international peace and security, the Security Council must be fully confident in a predictable decision-making process when it is requested to authorize African Union peace support operations for which financial assistance will be sought through assessments upon Member States, to be approved by the General Assembly. This process is therefore intended to allow for sufficient and reliable information to be provided to both Councils in a predictable and transparent manner to support informed decision-making and to form the basis of my proposals to the Security Council and the General Assembly, with due consideration for the need to respond rapidly owing to the urgency of the situation.

10. A standardized joint planning and mandating process alone, however, is not sufficient to ensure an effective joint decision-making framework; such a framework must be underpinned by enhanced cooperation between the two organizations. The earlier the United Nations and the African Union engage, the likelier it is for the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council to develop a common understanding of a situation which would form the basis for decision-making. Informal and active consultations would also help to address issues related to resources and mandate definition thereby avoiding any delay in responding to the crisis.

11. An effective joint planning process, followed by an ongoing joint review process, should apply throughout the duration of a peace support operation, to ensure that staffs of both the African Union and the United Nations have a commonly agreed and shared understanding of steps, tools and expected outcomes of the process. The organizations should ensure the development of technical expertise and promote knowledge exchange in key areas, which would serve as a basis for the joint planning and coordinated follow-up process. In parallel, a commonly agreed costing methodology for African Union peace support operations should be developed to ensure that credible estimates of financial implications can accompany options presented for consideration by the Security Council.

12. Reporting on mandate implementation will also be a key element in the lifespan of peace support operations authorized under the proposed framework. The Chairperson of the African Union Commission will be expected to provide regular reports to both the Peace and Security Council and the Security Council. A reporting

framework should therefore be developed and jointly agreed. This would establish clear, consistent and predictable reporting channels between the Secretariat, the Commission and the two Councils, as well as standardize reporting requirements depending on the type of reporting, including for general updates, joint assessment findings, and reporting on financial and human rights compliance.

Proposed consultative planning and mandating process

13. The following flow charts (figures I and II) provide a summary of the proposed joint United Nations-African Union planning and decision-making process:

Figure I
Consultative United Nations-African Union planning and decision-making process: from initial appraisal to authorization

Ongoing consultations at all levels (Secretary-General and African Union Commission Chairperson; Security Council and Peace and Security Council)
Initial crisis appraisal
African Union Commission Chairperson and Secretary-General decide to undertake a joint strategic assessment
Joint strategic assessment
Joint report containing range of options (with financial implications)
African Union Commission Chairperson submits recommendations based on joint report to Peace and Security Council
Secretary-General submits recommendations based on joint report to Security Council
Peace and Security Council authorizes peace support operation and requests United Nations financial support
Peace and Security Council communiqué transmitted by African Union Commission Chairperson
Secretary-General letter transmitting Peace and Security Council communiqué to Security Council
Security Council consideration and decision
Decision 2
Authorize without United Nations financial support
Decision 3
Other decision
Decision 1
Security Council authorize with United Nations financial support

14. The different steps of the standard proposed process are summarized below. As a matter of principle, the jointness will be sustained throughout the process, including through my regular consultations with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission.

15. **Initial crisis appraisal.** Both organizations have internal processes for assessing and responding when a crisis emerges or an existing crisis worsens within the African continent. To the extent that they consider it necessary to start assessing the conditions on the ground and intervention options, including the possible deployment of a peace support operation, the African Union Commission and the United Nations Secretariat will activate their own early warning mechanisms and internal analysis in accordance with usual practice. Following this initial crisis appraisal, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission may officially reach out to me to communicate the African Union's intention to conduct a strategic assessment of the situation on the ground. This assessment will recommend a broad range of options to address the situation, including through the possible deployment of an African Union peace support operation for which United Nations support may be required. The Chairperson will then invite the United Nations to participate in what would become a joint strategic assessment of the situation. The Chairperson may do so at his or her own initiative or at the request of the Peace and Security Council.

16. **Joint strategic assessment.** If agreement is reached to undertake a joint strategic assessment, a joint United Nations-African Union team will be constituted, led jointly by the African Union Commission and the United Nations Secretariat. The team could include other stakeholders, such as African Union regional mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution and Member States, as appropriate. The joint assessment should be understood as a flexible tool which can be adapted depending on the urgency of the situation and the availability of pre-existing analysis. However, it should contain a detailed conflict analysis and a range of options for response by the two Councils, identifying distinct roles for the African Union, the United Nations and other actors. The joint team should ensure that political solutions guide any option to deploy a peace support operation. Each option should include the estimated financial and support implications for both organizations as well as any other information required for both Councils to make informed decisions. The joint strategic assessment report will be submitted separately by the African Union Commission Chairperson and myself to the Peace and Security Council and the Security Council, respectively.

17. **Mandating.** Informal consultations between the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council should be encouraged throughout the process to find common ground on resource requirements and mandate definition before any formal decision is taken by either Council. Such exchanges could occur at the discretion of both Councils and in a format to be jointly agreed. If the Peace and Security Council eventually decides that an African Union peace support operation represents the best option for response under the prevailing circumstances and determines that United Nations support may be required, it may invite the African Union Commission Chairperson to transmit a letter to me to inform the Security Council of its decision. The Security Council will subsequently consider the African Union's request and the joint strategic assessment report, as well as any other relevant documents it may have requested from me, and provide an appropriate response.

Figure II

Consultative United Nations-African Union planning and decision-making process: from authorization to mandate renewal

Security Council authorization with United Nations financial support (reporting requests/timeline)
Regular monitoring and reporting on mandate implementation
Towards end of authorized period
Joint review resulting in a joint report
African Union Commission Chairperson submits recommendations based on joint report to Peace and Security Council
Secretary-General submits recommendations based on joint report to Security Council
Peace and Security Council authorizes mandate renewal/change and requests ongoing financial support from the United Nations
Peace and Security Council communiqué transmitted by African Union Commission Chairperson
Secretary-General letter transmitting Peace and Security Council communiqué to Security Council
Security Council consideration and decision on mandate renewal/change and financial support
Ongoing consultations at all levels (Secretary-General and African Union Commission Chairperson; Security Council and Peace and Security Council)

18. **Mission start-up.** Once an African Union peace support operation has been mandated, the United Nations Secretariat and the African Union Commission will jointly develop the detailed planning documents, such as the mission and component-level concepts, and secure the appropriate approvals. The United Nations-African Union planning team will continue to develop and finalize methodologies and templates to this end. Clear benchmarks for an African Union exit strategy and possible subsequent role of the United Nations should be established at the earliest stages in the planning of the mission and these benchmarks should be kept under regular joint review.

19. The African Union will develop policies and processes to ensure that international humanitarian law, international human rights law and a conduct and discipline compliance framework are integrated in all aspects of mission operations,

including planning, force generation and police selection and recruitment (including verification and screening), predeployment training, conduct of operations and monitoring and reporting procedures. The United Nations requires that support to all non-United Nations entities be provided in compliance with the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support provided to non-United Nations security forces. Therefore a United Nations capacity will likely be needed to ensure that the United Nations can undertake activities required under the due diligence policy, including risk assessment, support to the implementation of mitigation measures and establishment of mechanisms to prevent, monitor, report on and address violations of international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law. These compliance tasks could be undertaken by a new or pre-existing civilian presence already in the mission area or in a neighbouring country, depending on the nature of the conflict and the environment.

20. The African Union and the United Nations will appoint their respective senior mission leadership teams, in line with international humanitarian and human rights law and conduct and discipline compliance requirements.

21. **General reporting to the Councils.** The African Union Commission Chairperson and I would provide regular joint reports to the Peace and Security Council and the Security Council on the implementation of the mission's mandate, as defined by the two Councils. I may provide additional reporting as required through briefings to the Security Council.

22. **Joint assessments.** The Security Council will be requested to authorize a peace support operation and related support through the United Nations for a specific period and with a specific mandate. The extension of the mandate and support will require appropriate consideration by the Council. Accordingly, it will be important for the African Union Commission and the United Nations Secretariat to continue to undertake joint assessments, including joint evaluations and joint benchmarking exercises, throughout the duration of the mandate of the peace support operation, in order to review its impact on the ground and measure its performance against benchmarks or targets. Both will then inform the Peace and Security Council and the Security Council on the progress made by the mission, and make joint recommendations for adjustments in the mandate or support provided to the mission. Towards the end of the authorized period, joint reviews will be conducted in order to discuss mandate renewals and exit strategies, and will follow a similar decision-making process as for the initial mandating.

23. **Accountability and compliance.** The reports of the African Union Commission Chairperson to the Peace and Security Council and the Security Council will include updates on accountability, including issues pertaining to international humanitarian and human rights law as well as compliance with standards of conduct pertaining to military, police and civilian personnel in the mission. All allegations of violations, whether of international humanitarian and human rights law or misconduct, would be investigated and a report submitted on an annual basis to the Peace and Security Council and the Security Council on the actions taken by the African Union and its troop- and police-contributing countries.

24. **Transparency and access to information.** As part of the enhancement of the partnership, the African Union Commission would ensure, on the basis of agreed modalities, that access is provided to its planning, management and oversight processes, where appropriate.

25. **Financial reporting and audit.** The African Union Commission would provide access to United Nations oversight mechanisms on the basis of agreed modalities. If a peace support operation is financed at least in part through United Nations assessed contributions, sufficient information must be provided to the

United Nations Secretariat to enable my requisite reports containing proposals for appropriation of resources and subsequent performance reports to be submitted for consideration by the General Assembly. Any use of assessed contributions would be considered by the General Assembly, through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee, through the normal budget process. The United Nations will support the African Union to reinforce its monitoring and reporting policies in order to provide the required budgeting, financial and performance reports to the General Assembly.

IV. Financing of peace support operations

A. Considerations with regard to financial support to peace support operations

26. The United Nations and Member States could provide financial support to an African Union peace support operation through a number of different financing models, including voluntary contributions through a United Nations-managed trust fund; a subvention in exceptional emergency situations; joint financing of a jointly developed budget; establishment of a United Nations support office; or joint financing of a hybrid mission. Each financing arrangement has potential benefits, and no one model is appropriate for every situation. Different models may be more appropriate for different peace support operations, as determined by factors such as the size, character, expected duration and the nature of mandated tasks of the operation; the respective capabilities of the African Union Commission, troop- and police-contributing countries and external partners; and the results of human rights risk assessments. Each option developed as a result of the joint strategic assessment would be accompanied by a recommended financing model, which would in turn determine the role to be played by United Nations legislative bodies. It is expected that the Security Council would indicate the financing model to apply when authorizing a mission under the joint process outlined above.

27. A number of assumptions underpin the various financing models. First, these models assume that peace support operations will receive funding from the African Union Peace Fund in addition to any financial support from the United Nations. Second, the types of costs covered by the financial resources of the United Nations through assessed contributions on Member States for peace support operations would generally be in line with those usually incurred by United Nations peacekeeping operations; for example, the acquisition of contingent-owned equipment would remain a national responsibility and would not be financed by the United Nations. In all of the models, some form of mandated United Nations presence would be necessary to undertake tasks in areas such as planning, reporting and accountability, including those required for implementation of the human rights due diligence policy. Where a support office or hybrid mission is authorized, this capacity can be included in the structure. Finally, different models could be applied at different phases of an operation.

28. Although the types of costs covered would be similar to those of United Nations peacekeeping, the rates and structures of reimbursement used by the United Nations are based on costs, planning assumptions and operational requirements that are different from those applicable to African Union peace support operations. Even contingents deployed to United Nations peacekeeping missions with more robust requirements have experienced difficulties in fulfilling provisions under the existing United Nations contingent-owned equipment system, as evidenced by the discussions during the 2017 session of the Working Group on Contingent-Owned Equipment (see A/C.5/71/20). In Somalia, the United Nations contingent-owned

equipment system has struggled to meet the requirements of contingents deployed to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) engaged in combat operations. On average, the equipment deployed by AMISOM contingents is subject to greater wear and tear and has a much higher likelihood of loss or damage due to hostile action than that deployed to United Nations peacekeeping missions. It follows, therefore, that the African Union should develop personnel and contingent-owned equipment reimbursement systems applicable for its peace support operations.

29. Financing of reimbursements to African Union troop- and police-contributing countries under rates developed for African Union peace support operations can either remain the responsibility of the African Union or be shared between the African Union and the United Nations. However, before such reimbursement can be financed through United Nations assessed contributions, the rates of reimbursement must be approved by the General Assembly. The General Assembly should also consider the human rights due diligence policy-related implications of the payment of reimbursement through assessed contributions.

B. Financing models

30. The Security Council has, in the past, requested the establishment of trust funds through which to support African Union peace support operations through voluntary contributions. As noted in the report of the joint review, trust funds have been a flexible means of meeting targeted requirements, particularly when used to supplement other types of support (A/71/410-S/2016/809, para. 59). However, past experience has demonstrated that trust funds do not provide an adequate, predictable or sustainable source of funding. A trust fund should therefore not be the primary source of financing for a peace support operation but would supplement funding from the African Union Peace Fund and other sources of funding.

31. The Security Council could also consider a number of potential financing models through which assessed contributions could be used to support a peace support operation, as illustrated below.

Subvention

32. Requirements for an African Union deployment, in exceptional or emergency circumstances where shortfalls in available resources from the Peace Fund and other sources of funding are experienced, could potentially be financed through a subvention by the United Nations. Subventions have previously been used to meet urgent requirements of non-United Nations organizations, although none have been for field operations. Requests for subventions must be fully justified, but are not required to be as detailed as formal budget proposals for appropriation and can be prepared more quickly.

33. In previous cases, an organization would identify the shortfall in available funding against its planned resource requirements, which would give rise to a request for a subvention from the United Nations. Likewise, the African Union Commission would first determine the amount of funding shortfall required from the United Nations and make a formal request to me for a subvention. I would inform the Security Council of the request through an exchange of letters and subsequently transmit the request to the General Assembly for approval. A subvention, which is sought in exceptional or emergency circumstances, can provide resources only for a single budget period. Furthermore, the General Assembly requires reports on how funds provided through a subvention were utilized. All subventions require the approval of the General Assembly and, because they are facilitated by an authority to enter into commitments as opposed to an

appropriation, they have a cash flow impact upon the United Nations and would require a working capital reserve, such as the Peacekeeping Reserve Fund.

Joint financing of a jointly developed budget

34. Another option for the financing of an African Union peace support operation is a formal budget financed partially through United Nations assessed contributions but managed by the African Union. Budget estimates could be developed jointly by the United Nations Secretariat and the African Union Commission. The resulting joint budget submission would be used as the basis for my budget report presented to the General Assembly for its consideration and approval. The appropriation of the United Nations share of the approved budget would be apportioned among its Member States on the basis of the appropriate scale of assessments, while the African Union share of the approved budget would be charged to the African Union Peace Fund.

35. This financing model has not previously been used in a peace operation or field context and efforts would be required before the two organizations would be in a position to operationalize this model, including agreement on a joint budget estimation process with agreed planning assumptions and methodologies for defining costs for my budgetary submission, expenditure monitoring and budget performance reporting, oversight and audit arrangements and financial reporting requirements. Development of these processes, as well as the structures required to implement them, would further enhance the capacity of the African Union Commission to effectively and accountably manage its peace support operations in the future.

United Nations support office

36. A fourth option is for the Security Council to authorize the establishment of a United Nations support office financed through assessed contributions, to undertake specific tasks determined by the Security Council to support an African Union peace support operation. This model has been used in Somalia since 2009 to support AMISOM, through the United Nations Support Office for AMISOM (UNSOA) and the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS). The specific tasks delivered would be specified by the Security Council and should be determined on the basis of a comparative advantage exercise and an assessment of other sources of external financial and in-kind support to the African Union. The deployment of United Nations enabling units to support an African Union mission experiencing challenges generating such capabilities could be envisaged through a support office arrangement. As with UNSOA and UNSOS, United Nations assessed contributions would be used only to finance the United Nations support office and its activities. This model has the benefit of clear accountability for the management of United Nations resources but requires strong coordination at all levels to ensure the overall coherence of the combined operations. However, the AMISOM experience has shown the limitations of the support office model in effectively supporting highly kinetic combat missions.

Joint financing of a hybrid mission

37. The final option envisages the joint financing of a United Nations-African Union hybrid mission managed by the United Nations, but for which the African Union bears a portion of the costs in line with its commitment to meet some of the financial requirements of its own peace support operations. Hybrid missions benefit from the consolidation of military and political efforts from both organizations into a single structure in support of a peace process and also provide a peace support operation with the full spectrum of support available to United Nations

peacekeeping operations, including backstopping support from Headquarters and access to strategic deployment stocks and the Peacekeeping Reserve Fund. The establishment of a mission as a hybrid mission may also be necessary for political reasons. However, a hybrid mission may not be appropriate for all operations, including those focused on combat operations. Costs for hybrid missions could be apportioned between the two organizations.

V. Mission support considerations

38. The Security Council has repeatedly stressed the importance of partnership between the United Nations and African Union and of this being underpinned by principles such as comparative advantage, burden-sharing, jointness, transparency and accountability. These principles also apply to mission support.

39. Comparative advantage is the ability of an actor to undertake an activity at a lower opportunity cost than other actors. Opportunity cost should be considered in the broadest sense, including political, security and financial considerations. In the integrated assessment and planning process used in the United Nations, these assessments consider each actor's legal mandate, demonstrated capacity and ability to provide a unique contribution in the selected area. Comparative advantage assessments are context-specific and comparative advantages are, by definition, relative. In the context of partnerships with regional organizations, comparative advantages may be identified during a strategic assessment, separate technical surveys and during the course of a joint planning process.

40. While the United Nations has, over several decades, developed extensive experience, expertise, capacity and processes in the area of mission support and related tasks, this does not always translate into a comparative advantage for all support tasks. Moreover, comparative advantages may evolve over time or be determined by unique circumstances in a particular context. For example, should the United Nations be required to develop entirely different processes and systems to undertake a support task in a different manner and under different conditions than in United Nations missions, it may be more effective for another actor to deliver that form of support.

41. Transfer of tasks from one actor to another may take place upon start-up, during the sustainment phase, or during or in anticipation of a transition. As the African Union develops its internal capacities, including the continental logistics base and acquisition capacity, it is most likely that it will gain the comparative advantage for additional support responsibilities.

Flexible model for mission support

42. Several mission support models have, in the past, been used to support missions mandated or authorized by the African Union. The support package model which has evolved over time to support AMISOM represents the most comprehensive arrangement involving multiple actors, namely the United Nations, the African Union, troop- and police-contributing countries, and subregional and other partners including the European Union. In other recent African Union peace support operations in Mali and the Central African Republic, the United Nations provided support through management of a multi-partner trust fund, but had a limited role in mission support to the forces prior to the transition of those two missions into United Nations peacekeeping operations. Instead, external partners augmented the capacities of the African Union in those operations and also provided direct support to national contingents. Finally, for operations in which contingents are primarily operating in their own national territory such as the Multinational

Joint Task Force to combat Boko Haram and the African Union-led Regional Task Force for the elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army, mission support is primarily the responsibility of the individual troop-contributing countries, to whom partners provide support on a voluntary and bilateral basis.

43. In situations where mission support requires collaboration between numerous entities to succeed, mission support is most effective when each actor performs tasks within its expertise, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities and under a clearly understood command and control framework. However, best practice indicates that some planning, coordination and compliance elements should always remain joint responsibilities in a true partnership setting. Mission support arrangements for African Union peace support operations cannot rely on fixed templates. Instead, a flexible approach should be employed based on standard mission support principles adapted and applied to the context and requirements of a peace support operation to identify which actor — whether the African Union Commission, the United Nations Secretariat, troop- or police-contributing countries, subregional or external partners — has the comparative advantage for each mission support task. Mission support would be considered from the earliest stages of planning, as support considerations affect other mandating and financing decisions. Options for mission support would be presented to the Peace and Security Council and the Security Council as part of the options developed through the joint strategic assessment and in alignment with the recommended financing models.

Principles of mission support

44. Mission support to an African Union peace support operation should be provided in a timely, efficient, effective and accountable manner. General principles governing mission support should include the use of managed and phased deployment; a light, flexible support footprint utilizing the capabilities of troop and police contributors, enabling units and implementing partners; and multiple and combined lines of supply through commercial contracts, military enablers and force assets. Logistical operations should be designed effectively to avoid double handling and multiple stages of interim storage and waste, keeping in mind that mission operations and infrastructure should pose minimal impact on natural resources, the environment, surrounding communities and cultural sites.

45. Troop- and police-contributing countries are responsible for the preparation of formed units for service in African Union peace operations. Units should be vetted during selection, adequately trained and fully equipped. They must deploy with the required minimum capacity to ensure self-sufficiency for life support during the initial phase and the capability to be self-sustaining thereafter. Troop- and police-contributing countries should maintain over-the-horizon support, including supply chains for consumables and spare parts for their deployed units. The critical role of bilateral partners in assisting troop- and police-contributing countries to meet gaps in equipment and capabilities must be acknowledged. In addition to operational requirements, predeployment training must provide personnel with the understanding of their obligations under international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law as well as standards of conduct, including with regard to the prohibition against sexual exploitation and abuse, and there must be sufficient command and control within national contingents to enforce discipline and ensure adherence to these standards.

46. Support provided by the United Nations would take into account considerations such as the safety and security and welfare of United Nations personnel; provision of support in a fully transparent and accountable manner; conformity with United Nations rules and regulations; and strict compliance with the human rights due diligence policy and standards of conduct. These arrangements

would be set out in a memorandum of understanding between the United Nations and the African Union and in line with United Nations standards and practices.

Mission support tasks

47. Regardless of the mandate of a specific mission, each mission must have the capability to undertake a core set of mission support tasks in order to deliver on its mandate. The decision to assign responsibility for delivering on these tasks to the African Union, the United Nations or another entity would be based upon the determination of comparative advantage on a case-by-case basis. These tasks include, but are not limited to:

- recruitment and personnel management
- budgeting, financial and audit management
- reimbursement and claims management
- procurement, acquisition and contracts management
- property management
- movement control
- surface transport
- air transport
- rations management and catering services
- fuel management
- general supplies
- warehousing and material handling
- water and wastewater management
- solid waste and hazardous waste management
- power generation and energy efficiency
- engineering, facilities and camp services management
- vehicle fleet management and maintenance
- medical services including medical evacuation capacity
- equipment verification
- geospatial information systems and cartographic services
- communications and information technology systems
- environmental management
- support to and implementation of compliance and accountability frameworks on human rights, international humanitarian law and conduct and discipline
- welfare management
- other relevant senior management functions.

48. A detailed accountability framework would determine the policies and procedures to govern actions to be taken, including clear delineation of roles and responsibilities, delegations of authority, key performance indicators, monitoring and reporting instruments, audit and other oversight requirements and complaints and response mechanisms.

49. The report on the future of United Nations peace operations indicated that the current administrative framework for United Nations peace operations is slow, cumbersome and averse to risk, and current processes have proved ineffective when applied to volatile environments. These challenges are relevant when the United Nations is requested to support African Union peace support operations and are compounded when the United Nations is asked to support higher-tempo operations than those undertaken by the United Nations, as is the case with the offensive operations currently mandated or authorized by the African Union, entailing combat or counter-terrorism. As noted in the report of the joint review, the United Nations must revise its internal administrative processes, policies and procedures to more effectively support modern field operations, both its own and those of the African Union. Indeed, I indicated during the Security Council thematic debate on peacekeeping on 6 April 2017 that changing the rules and regulations to facilitate the work of peace operations is one of nine areas of reform to be pursued by the Organization.

VI. Compliance and oversight for United Nations support of African Union peace support operations

50. The Security Council in its resolution 2320 (2016) encouraged the African Union to finalize its human rights and conduct and discipline frameworks to ensure that its peace support operations are conducted in compliance with international humanitarian and human rights standards and to ensure oversight and accountability, underscoring the importance of these commitments and the requirement for oversight by the Security Council for operations authorized by the Security Council. The contours of this framework were outlined in the report of the High Representative for the African Union Peace Fund of August 2016. The African Union Commission is working on mainstreaming human rights as part of mission planning and management as well as standardizing protection mechanisms — which currently exist only in AMISOM — across all of its missions. Pursuant to resolution 2320 (2016), the African Union is expected to provide an update on revised benchmarks and timelines for the implementation of the outstanding elements of the frameworks.

A. Human rights

51. The need to develop and implement a robust and effective human rights framework for African Union peace support operations has previously been recognized by the African Union, the United Nations and United Nations Member States. Some of the peace support operations the African Union is likely to undertake, specifically high-tempo combat missions, carry their own specific risks and requirements in relation to compliance with international human rights, humanitarian and refugee standards.

52. Building and implementing an adequate human rights framework and establishing the related capacity for peace support operations will require a significant political and financial investment in both organizations by the international community, member States and troop-contributing countries. The current capacity of the African Union consists of a very small number of dedicated staff.

53. Considering its own mandate and institutional experience, the United Nations is in a strong position to support and advise the African Union on the establishment and adoption of relevant policies, methodologies, guidance and mechanisms in the

field of selection and screening, training, conduct and discipline, monitoring, accountability, protection of civilians, rules and regulations guiding African Union peace support operations, and planning. It will be critical to ensure that the United Nations is able to devote specific and adequate capacity to meet African Union requests for support.

54. In 2011, the United Nations adopted a formalized approach to the issue of human rights standards and United Nations support to security forces with the promulgation of the human rights due diligence policy. That policy sets out principles and measures to ensure that such support is consistent with the Organization's purposes and principles as set out in the Charter and its obligations under international law to respect, promote and encourage respect for international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law. Observations from recent experiences in implementing the policy for peace support operations were presented to the Security Council in the report of the joint review (A/71/410-S/2016/809). While the human rights due diligence policy is primarily an internal United Nations requirement, its implementation undoubtedly provides a space to support compliance by African Union operations with international human rights and humanitarian standards and therefore improves the chances of the ultimate success of the operation.

55. To realize fully the strengthened partnership between the United Nations and African Union on peace and security, the United Nations needs to significantly reinforce its existing capacity, processes and structures at Headquarters to ensure full compliance with the requirements under the human rights due diligence policy, including with regard to communication to entities receiving its support, and clarification of roles and responsibilities for conducting risk assessments and implementing mitigating measures. In addition, the United Nations must have appropriate capacity to perform the required monitoring and reporting functions in the theatre of operations receiving support.

B. Conduct and discipline

56. The management of autonomous forces in peacekeeping, including those of the African Union, requires a framework of accountability intrinsic to an external command and control structure, operating within the standards of conduct of the African Union. It also requires monitoring mechanisms to ensure compliance and mechanisms to ensure the provision of victim assistance, where required.

57. The African Union needs to put in place a conduct and discipline framework that sets out strategic, programmatic and operational expectations for all stakeholders — including the United Nations, the African Union and troop- and police-contributing countries. This framework would include (a) standards that are equivalent to United Nations standards and are reflected in standard agreements with contributing countries and host country authorities, as appropriate; (b) monitoring mechanisms to ensure the consistent implementation of standards of conduct, including systems to support monitoring activities, such as misconduct tracking databases; (c) compliance mechanisms to ensure preventative measures, including training to enable uniformed components to discharge their responsibilities, vetting and awareness-raising; (d) accountability measures to address cases of non-compliance, including but not limited to immediate removal and replacement of individuals reported to have violated conditions of service, sanctions in substantiated cases and criminal prosecution, as applicable, in the most serious cases such as those involving sexual exploitation and abuse; (e) remediation measures to address harm done to victims of violations of the standards of conduct,

including sexual exploitation and abuse; and (f) reporting mechanisms to ensure transparency in matters of conduct and discipline.

58. The standards for deployment set out in the United Nations operational guidance for the implementation of Security Council resolution 2272 (2016) are a critical point of reference for the African Union in developing its conduct and discipline framework and in considering the criteria that should be in place prior to the deployment of military contingents and formed police units.

59. There is also a need for a joint agreement between the United Nations and the African Union which describes the level, types and extent of support that would be expected from the United Nations in the implementation of the African Union's conduct and discipline framework, while ensuring that responsibility for addressing violations such as sexual exploitation and abuse remain with those directly accountable.

VII. Conclusion

60. Over the years, the partnership between the United Nations and African Union has evolved significantly, as noted on many previous occasions. The Security Council in resolution 2320 (2016) reaffirmed its commitment to further enhancing the Organization's collaboration with the African Union, and that resolution therefore represented a key milestone in the partnership. In the past six months, much progress has been made at the technical level on different modalities for United Nations support to African Union peace support operations as well as on the necessary safeguards to be put in place to ensure a proper accountability framework, with a view to more systematically operationalizing the future partnership.

61. African Union peace support operations should be seen as a tool of the entire international community to address crises on the African continent. This must be factored in the development of new strategic thinking on the necessary diversity of peace operations. Considering the limitations of the United Nations peacekeeping doctrine with regard to peace enforcement and counter-terrorism, the African Union peace support operations are a tool for the United Nations to better discharge its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in certain situations. This ability of the African Union therefore constitutes an asset for the international community. The African initiatives in the Sahel, in the Lake Chad Basin and in Somalia illustrate the increasing complementary role played by the African Union.

62. However, the joint review of available mechanisms to finance and support African Union peace support operations mandated by the Security Council noted how African Union peace support operations had suffered from a number of recurrent capacity gaps and challenges, arising in part from the Union's limited finances. Therefore, while it is clear that the African Union must continue to build its capacity to plan, finance, sustain and oversee its own missions, predictable and adequate funding for African Union operations is absolutely crucial for the international community as a whole.

63. In the past decade, we have seen that these operations benefit from joint oversight by the two organizations. Notwithstanding the many outstanding technical aspects related to United Nations support to African Union peace support operations, the principal decision to take forward sustainable financing and expand the scope of mission support for African Union peace support operations is first and foremost political.

64. While the proposed framework of decision-making will make joint action more effective, further technical work needs to be undertaken to agree on the modalities for joint analysis, planning and assessment as well as reporting to the relevant intergovernmental bodies. Such tools could support Member States in making informed decisions to address any given situation and help to ensure coordinated delivery on mandated tasks by both the United Nations and the African Union. In order for this work to continue, I recommend that the Council endorse the proposed joint assessment and planning process set forth in this report, which can be adapted on a case-by-case basis, to support the decision-making of legislative bodies of the respective organizations.

65. Beyond the use of voluntary contributions through trust funds, the United Nations has identified four options through which United Nations assessed contributions could be used to help to meet the requirements of African Union peace support operations, noting that no single option is appropriate for all situations: (a) subvention in exceptional or emergency circumstances, (b) joint financing of a jointly developed budget, (c) United Nations support office and (d) joint financing of a hybrid mission. Three of these models are available for use today. The option of a jointly developed budget would require additional work by the Secretariat and the African Union Commission before it could be put into practice. In the interim, I would strongly recommend that the Security Council endorse this option in principle.

66. The United Nations recommends that the African Union develop its own reimbursement systems for personnel and contingent-owned equipment that meet the requirements of its peace support operations. The Secretariat is prepared to work with all relevant stakeholders to help to develop such a framework, recognizing that General Assembly approval is required for reimbursement rates determined by the African Union to be payable through United Nations assessed contributions and for a process to be established to facilitate the application of the human rights due diligence policy to reimbursement.

67. In the present report it is also noted that mission support approaches must be adapted for the context of a specific African Union peace support operation. A flexible mission support model should be implemented in which tasks such as planning, coordination, verifications and compliance are shared. Developing joint planning and coordination structures in which the African Union and the United Nations function as partners and on the basis of their respective responsibilities as spelled out in the Charter and the Constitutive Act, as described above, is important in this regard. The roles of support providers should be determined through an assessment of comparative advantage and should be subject to review and change. The multiplicity of support actors, including troop- and police-contributing countries, the African Union, the United Nations, subregional and other partners, will increase transaction costs and create challenges in coordination but may be necessary for the success of operations given the unique capabilities and expertise each actor can bring to bear.

68. As was noted in the report of the joint review, the United Nations must revise its own internal administrative processes, policies and procedures to better support modern field operations, whether its own or those of the African Union. I intend to review these procedures in the contexts of the ongoing peace and security architecture review and management reform processes. The time has come to put the requirements of the field at the heart of the operations of the United Nations.

69. I welcome the efforts made by the African Union in developing compliance and accountability frameworks for human rights and conduct and discipline, including policies, mechanisms and processes to integrate these elements into the

planning, functions and conduct of its operations as well as the capacity and expertise required for their implementation.

70. Significant efforts and investment in both organizations are still required to complete the development of effective and adequate frameworks and capacities for compliance and accountability in these areas. The United Nations stands ready to support the African Union in these efforts, though it may require additional resources to effectively support the conceptualization, establishment and improvement of relevant mechanisms to prevent and address violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law and cases of sexual exploitation and abuses committed in the context of security operations.

71. We live in a highly volatile and turbulent world. It is incumbent upon those with the vested responsibility for ensuring peace and security to consider a full range of responses required to address existing and emerging threats. Fully operationalizing the United Nations partnership with the African Union, in particular its peace support operations, presents a unique opportunity for the international community to provide a timely and context-specific response to an emerging crisis. Such a partnership is imperative, given the complexity and multiplicity of conflicts today.

United Nations S/2017/455

Security Council

Distr.: General
1 June 2017
English
Original: Russian

Letter dated 25 May 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the comments of the Information and Press Department of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs of 25 May 2017 regarding the Syrian "chemical weapons dossier" (see annex).

I should be grateful if this letter and its annex could be circulated as an official document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) P. **Iliichev**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

17-08906 (E) 050617 050617

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 25 May 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Comments of the Information and Press Department of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the Syrian "chemical weapons dossier"

On 23 May the Security Council held another discussion of the situation regarding the Syrian "chemical weapons dossier". The three Western permanent members of the Security Council sought to give the meeting an expressly anti-Assad and anti-Russian tone. It was confirmed once again that these "denouncers" of Damascus were not interested in establishing the truth about the crucial question of who was really behind the possible use of sarin on 4 April 2017 in the Syrian governorate of Idlib. The representatives of the United States of America, the United Kingdom and France are desperately resisting attempts to ascertain to what extent the verdict they reached "in absentia" on the supposedly indisputable guilt of the Government of Bashar Al-Assad for the chemical attack in Khan Shaykhun is justified.

An ugly picture is emerging. Almost two months after the chemical incident, it seems that no one is in a hurry to travel to Khan Shaykhun to verify all the circumstances of such a heinous act. Moreover, the Westerners are even ruling out the possibility of visiting Sha'irat airbase, where, they allege, the sarin used in Khan Shaykhun was stored.

Regrettably, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) fact-finding mission responsible for establishing whether chemical weapons have been used is taking no action in this regard; time and again it has postponed travelling to Khan Shaykhun, citing the adverse security situation. However, the leadership of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism responsible for investigating cases of the use of chemical weapons in Syria is yet to develop an investigation plan that will specify which places should be visited, who should be questioned and which documents should be requested.

The Russian position on the situation is well known and abundantly clear: the investigation of the incident should be conducted with the utmost care, strictly in accordance with the mandates of the Joint Investigative Mechanism and the fact-finding mission approved by the Security Council and OPCW, and in line with all the investigative actions, methods and rules set out in the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. Visits must be made to Khan Shaykhun and Sha'irat, that is, both the place where the barbarous act was committed and the site that allegedly has a direct connection to it. The flawed practice that has developed in the work of the Joint Investigative Mechanism and the fact-finding mission, where investigations are conducted remotely and are based on the evidence of unreliable witnesses and sometimes even phoney casualties, is categorically unacceptable. Extensive use is being made of the resources of long-discredited non-governmental organizations with established connections to fighters and terrorist structures. This is not merely a pretence — we are dealing with conscious, deliberate falsification in pursuit of clearly stated political aims.

We once again call upon our Western colleagues, who are flaunting their quasi-evidence, to answer a number of specific questions. In particular, when

biomedical and other samples were collected, was the chain of custody — a procedure fundamental to the Chemical Weapons Convention — respected? Is it not time to stop establishing far-reaching incriminating conclusions on the basis of the plainly stage-managed, phoney videos and other unreliable information that the intransigent Syrian opposition and its foreign patrons provide in abundance to the Joint Investigative Mechanism and the fact-finding mission?

Returning to the topic of visiting Sha'irat, we recall that Damascus provided official guarantees of safe access to the site for experts of the fact-finding mission as early as the beginning of April. Furthermore, the Syrian Government requested that such a visit should be organized without delay, thereby confirming its readiness to fulfil its obligations under paragraph 12 of the mandate (terms of reference) of the fact-finding mission and part XI, paragraph 15, of the Annex on Implementation and Verification (Verification Annex) to the Chemical Weapons Convention. The latter states expressly that "the [OPCW] inspection team shall have the right of access to any and all areas which could be affected by the alleged use of chemical weapons". All the prerequisites for organizing a visit, from the point of view of security requirements and the fulfilment of obligations under the Convention, are therefore met. This contrasts sharply with the passivity of the Joint Investigative Mechanism and the indifferent position of the OPCW leadership, which believes that visiting the airbase does not fall within the competence of the fact-finding mission.

We insist that the Joint Investigative Mechanism join the fact-finding mission in investigating the situation at Sha'irat airbase. We recall that, in paragraph 6 of Security Council resolution 2319 (2016), the Joint Investigative Mechanism is expressly directed to offer its services to OPCW. In Security Council resolution 2235 (2015), which actually established the Joint Investigative Mechanism, paragraphs 3 and 4 set forth the requirement to identify those responsible for the stockpiling and retention of chemical weapons. Furthermore, paragraph 7 of the resolution clearly sets out the need to ensure full access to all locations relevant to the investigation. Why, then, is this situation openly disregarded by our opponents?

Not only the Russian Federation but also many other countries consider it necessary to visit Sha'irat on the basis of the facts and circumstances known at the present time (Security Council resolution 2235 (2015), para. 7).

We demand that the leadership of the Joint Investigative Mechanism and the OPCW Technical Secretariat take immediate steps to remedy the current situation, send their experts to Khan Shaykhun and Sha'irat without delay, ensure a comprehensive and impartial review of all the circumstances of the case and take other steps laid down in their mandates in order to "identify to the greatest extent feasible individuals, entities, groups, or governments who were perpetrators, organizers, sponsors or otherwise involved in the use of chemicals as weapons, including chlorine or any other toxic chemical, in the Syrian Arab Republic" (Security Council resolution 2235 (2015), para. 5).

Continued failure to conduct a full investigation will call into question the capability of the Joint Investigative Mechanism and the fact-finding mission and, consequently, the advisability of their continued existence.